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village by this time, and there her relatives give her sweets, show her beautiful views, and if possible beautiful dresses. She has to be careful lest too many sweets lead to worms in her stomach or in her newborn child. It is not unusual for sexual relations to occur in the latter part of a pregnancy. Because of the dangers just stated, it does not occur in the fifth or eighth month, lest the woman miscarry. In the eighth or ninth month, however, the girl generally has a strong sexual desire, and in the last month the couple may discretely have intercourse. This is done with care: they lie on their sides or adopt some other position so that no weight is placed on the womb. This intercourse is said to satisfy the woman and ensure that she has no problem with the delivery. One old therapist used to advise when a delivery was late that the couple should have intercourse, and then delivery would follow within a day or two.

When the confinement is imminent, the woman moves back to her father's house, especially if it is her first pregnancy, because she will get better treatment there. While she is there everyone in the hamlet should feed her one meal. For subsequent births she may be allowed to remain at her husband's house, and may use the outer room for her confinement (Thurston 1909 : 109). For the first confinement, however, she is taken to her father's house even if she does not want to go.

Birth

4.6. Women generally deliver after the ninth month is completed, but some do so 10-15 days before this, others 10-15 days after. There may even be successful births at the end of the tenth month, generally in a subsequent delivery, not a woman's first. Such a birth, however, is probably accounted for by the pregnancy in fact having started only at the month following that which is being counted from. It is recognized that conception could have occurred on any day up to the one when the last menses was expected but failed to appear. Otherwise when a birth is a long time overdue it usually means there will be twins. One of these is always weak, and it needs the extra time to develop properly.

Some 40-50 per cent of women give birth a day or two before the new moon or the full moon; so they must be careful as the new moon and the full moon approach. Sometimes they give birth

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in the days immediately after the new or full moon. It is believed that a male birth on the night of the full moon or the next day is auspicious, but if on the day of the new moon it is more inauspicious than on any other day (Reclus 1885: 203). This belief is enshrined in the saying, "The boy born on the new moon day is bad; the girl born on the full moon day is bad." (For purposes of Badaga ritual practice, and this particular belief too, a sunset ends one day and is the beginning of the next.) A birth coming on a day between the new and the full moon is lucky; whereas one between the full and the new moon is unlucky. It is exceptionally auspicious if a *son* is born at the full moon, and luckier still if this happens to be the mother's eighth delivery (though not necessarily her eighth live birth). Under these circumstances the family will "prosper like a king's." If on the other hand it is a girl who is born at the new moon, or at her mother's eighth delivery, it is then believed that the family the child marries into will prosper, and so many will want to marry her.

The unfortunate boy born on the day of the new moon is called Tippa; and a girl born at the full moon is similarly Tippe. As soon as such an unlucky child has been born it is put into an old winnow and dragged a few inches across the floor. The name Tippa means "rubbish dump," and this act symbolizes throwing the baby away as rubbish: afterwards the inauspicious birth will not have a bad effect on the family. Later, at its naming ceremony, the child will be given two names so that it does not have to be called by this distasteful one.

4.7. Long ago in cases of very difficult labour Badaga midwives performed Caesarean operations, using the small knife that is intended for severing the umbilicus. I could not ascertain whether the wound was stitched up afterwards: in those times people did not care very much whether the mother died, provided the child was born and remained alive. Now the opposite attitude prevails. Some midwives still know how to reach into a womb and remove a dead foetus. It should be noted that if a pregnant woman dies the foetus must be cut out before disposal of the mother's corpse: from this unfortunate custom some basic surgical knowledge was undoubtedly gleaned in the past.

Nowadays if a woman is having a particularly difficult labour a special mixture is prepared for her. Items used in this include dried ginger, pepper, cumin, clove, crude sugar, coffee powder,

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clarified butter and sweet flag. All but the last two are grown in the plains and bought in the bazaar. Sweet flag is a Nilgiri plant the rhizome of which is dried. These items have to be mixed in particular proportions. The dried ginger is a rhizome one cm. thick; a piece one cm. long is used; also the same amount of sweet flag rhizome; four small pepper seeds; one teaspoonful of the small cumin seeds; three or four cloves; 1/2 cube of sugar; 1/2 teaspoonful of coffee powder; and two teaspoonfuls of clarified butter. Except for the butter, coffee, sugar, and cumin, these items are crushed on an open mortar with a metate-like stone roller. This object, about 20 cms. across, is called *maddare* or *matkallu*, and is used exclusively by Badaga therapists for grinding up medicines. An empty pot is put on the fire, and the cumin seeds roasted in it; when ready, they make a crackling sound. Then about two tumblers of water and the crude sugar are added, and after them the other ground items. As soon as the water boils the coffee powder is added; and when the liquid has half evaporated, it is filtered carefully through a piece of clean white cloth into a tumbler containing the clarified butter. When it has cooled a little this mixture is given to the woman to drink. After that her pains stop if the delivery is not really imminent; or else she has a quick delivery.

4.8. For a week or so before the expected birth the neighbours and other women of the girl's lineage keep an eye on her. When one of them has to go off to the fields to work she first calls to enquire about the health of the expectant woman. As soon as labour starts her parents send messages to all of the neighbouring houses, and also to her husband's house. The latter is supposed to pay the messengers who bring the news to him.

There is generally more than one midwife in each village. There are usually also some girls studying midwifery, so that as the years pass the younger women can take over from the old midwives. No male is allowed to be present at a Badaga birth. Any woman can be there, and generally women who know how to deliver a baby are asked to come, as are the girls who are learning midwifery. There is no rule that small girls should be excluded but they usually are because they may become afraid. For that same reason pregnant women are generally not allowed there. Women who are breast-feeding babies are also strongly advised not to come, since the strong smell may have a bad effect on both mother and child. Despite such warnings some brave nursing mothers may still come,

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844 (853) generally those who have had several births themselves. Most women in a village want to go and watch a delivery; but it is said to be a sin for any woman watching to leave before the delivery is completed. This is recalled in the saying, "Delivery is like having escaped death," which means that the pain borne by a woman is nearly as much as at death. In the same way, one should never pass a woman in advanced pregnancy, in case she is in labour and (843) needs help. If too many come to the delivery one old woman selects who should stay to help and asks the rest to leave. Those who remain give encouragement to the expectant mother by saying, "Be brave, there won't be any pain." Badagas expect the woman not to cry out; but she will if the pain is too much. "The man who has seen a tiger hunt is scared like a woman just before delivery," runs the proverb, probably in reference to a woman's first delivery.

Usually some eight or ten women attend at a birth, although no more than one of them is likely to be recognized as the midwife. Though it is not compulsory for them to be present they nevertheless come, mainly out of genuine concern for the girl's predicament but also partly because they expect their friends to render similar service when necessary for themselves or their daughters. It is clear 844 578 that enmity among Badaga families does not particularly concern the women, because even if a family is not on speaking terms with that of the pregnant girl, a woman from the "enemy" family will still attend at the birth; or if that is not possible will come to her father's house afterwards to enquire after her—as indeed would a male of this "enemy" household. Such an "enemy" neighbour woman will not eat food provided by the girl's father while she attends at the birth, but she may well accept food provided by the girl's husband and take it home to eat. The thinking behind (858) this pattern of behaviour is that the girl—at least when she was an unmarried child living in her father's house—was common to the whole village. Badaga children are always viewed in this light, rather than as exclusively members of particular families.

844 Male relatives of the woman wait outside on the veranda or the street, and if there are difficulties they will offer advice or fetch other women to help. Generally the husband of the woman is (846) amongst these men. There is nothing in particular that he should be doing; and Badagas have never practised the *couvade*. It is her husband who must meet all expenses associated with the birth, even though it occurs in the home of the woman's father. Clarified

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butter, palm sugar, and several limes will always be required and the husband should have purchased them a few days beforehand. Even the black peppers and other ingredients for the special curry given the woman after her delivery must all be provided by her husband. However, it is common nowadays for the girl's father to buy all of these materials, and her husband to reimburse him in cash.

4.9. In the old days delivery occurred only on the veranda, and never in the house, because it was an impure act. There were no separate menstrual huts for this, as with the neighbouring Kotas. Now the birth generally takes place in one of the outer rooms of the house. Some women even give birth in the inner, more sacred room, while others go to a hospital. In the old days however a screen of planks or blankets would be erected on the veranda to protect the woman from wind and cold; for then as now her body was bare during the delivery. A loincloth is simply put over her shoulders for a little warmth. Now that the event occurs inside the house though, the door is closed to keep in the heat.

When the woman starts to labour, people in her house call for a village midwife, who takes charge of the situation. It is said that in the old days the grinding stone was in front of the woman for her to hold on to. Nowadays, following their experience in hospitals, some women are delivered lying flat on their backs on the floor, with face upwards. More usually the woman kneels on the ground, with a girl in front of her to support her. Her legs are apart, and an experienced midwife is behind her to catch the baby before it falls onto the floor. During the actual delivery the midwife checks that the umbilical cord is not around the baby's neck. In some instances gingelly oil is applied to the vagina to ease the delivery. (This is referred to in a proverb about there being an appropriate time and place for everything: "It is like delivering a child where oil is seen.")

In the old days midwives knew how to put a hand inside and pull the baby out, and some can still do this (after carefully cutting their nails and washing the hands): it is only done as a last resort with a difficult delivery, though. Before that in a difficult case the midwife feels the surface of the stomach to tell if the baby is in the wrong position. If it is, then the mother is made to place her head on the pounding stone, and five or six women support her as she balances there, upside down with her legs held up in the air. Then

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844 [845] a midwife who knows this skill shakes the woman's legs until the baby comes into the right position.

Post-partum Practices

4.10. Before the cutting of the umbilicus, the baby is laid on the floor on sacking or cloth. The cord is tied with a piece of string (in old days, a thread lampwick), some 8 cm. from the belly. This string is to curtail bleeding. Then the umbilical cord is cut with a penknife or razor blade. In earlier days, significantly, it was only to be cut with a knife made by the Kotas and otherwise used in reaping.

Immediately a couple of handfuls of cold water are poured on the infant's shoulders or dabbed on with a cloth. In particular the left shoulder of a boy is wetted, or the crown of the head if it is a girl. This act is intended to make the child strong for carrying things, on the shoulder and head respectively. It is then bathed in very hot water.

In earlier days the next step was to cover the baby with oil pressed from the seeds of the castor-oil bush. Now ground-nut oil is put all over the body instead. The mother also takes a bath in very hot water—hotter than a normal bath. After this she sits down and is given a tumbler of cold water to drink. This is to make any shivering subside and to give her peace of mind. Some [273] women now take a sip of brandy, a practice dating back a century or so. If a woman's family are too poor to afford a nip of brandy, [276] a little opium is perhaps given instead, or else very poor people might simply crush a dried poppy head and give it to the mother in a glass of tea or coffee. Typically a poor mother will get one dose of opium just after the delivery, and then another on the following two days. The problem with using opium as a medicine [276] is that, whether it is taken after childbirth or simply to cure a cold, it may become addictive. The new mother is also given a little palm jaggery (a kind of crude sugar that keeps for years). Next they give her three or four cloves of garlic to eat, while one piece is put into each of her ears.

844 846 4.11. After both mother and baby have been bathed, the child is brought back to her. The mother sits, holding the baby, with its face on her right side and at the right breast. Before taking its first suck, it is given a drop of ground-nut oil to drink. Then a lime is cut in

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half, and on each cut surface someone puts fresh cowdung, a blade of Bermuda grass, and some clarified butter. Then an old, experienced woman takes the first half of the lime and runs itdo wn the right side of the baby, not quite touching the body. As she does this she says: "This child belongs to both the father and the mother;" but she does not name the parents. This assertion of joint parentage is the whole point of the ritual. Then the half lime is sucked by the mother, touched to her child's mouth, and thrown away. In the same manner the other half of the lime is then run down the left side of the baby, the same pronouncement made, and the mother sucks the lime, touches it to the baby's mouth, and throws it away too. The lime is perhaps intended to ward off evil spirits. If at an unexpected birth no lime is available, the ritual is either done using the leaf of a lime tree, or failing that it is done with the cowdung, grass and clarified butter alone. After this the baby is fed, first from the right breast, then from the left.

Bezoar is a "heat-giving" substance from the stomach of a cow, supposedly the one which leads the herd. A small quantity of it—about as much as a coriander seed—is covered with mother's milk and given to a male infant just after he has drunk milk for the first time. Should there be none available then, the bezoar can also be fed to him on the third, fifth or seventh day of life, and that day must be a Friday, Tuesday, or Sunday. It is believed that this substance will make the boy active, strong, and very brave; it is therefore not given to girls, lest they grow up to disobey their husbands. The biggest bezoar stones are perhaps 2 cm. in diameter. They are found in the stomachs of nearly all cows, especially those which are very healthy or those which are barren. Interestingly, all vegetarian Badagas give this substance to their infants, even though they know it comes from a dead animal, Like all children's medicines, it is now obtainable in the town bazaars, though formerly it was supplied by the Kota tribe; it even comes in "tablet form."

If the woman is actually ill before the delivery, and in half of the other childbirth cases as a precaution, she is given a medicine before drinking the coffee offered her after the birth. An oil called *be:venne*, which comes from the seed of the nim tree, is boiled with some garlic in it, allowed to cool for a while, and then the mother drinks a little and the remainder is rubbed over her head, neck and body. The oil is very "heat-giving." A piece of garlic is tied with

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A piece of garlic is tied with cloth to each of her big toes, to prevent her from catching cold. (If she gets a heavy cold, the illness is called *janni*, and the temperature of the body is below normal. Then a liquid medicine can be administered). Some five to ten minutes after the oil is given, the mother is offered coffee with palm jaggery. This is given to all women after delivery.

4.12. The afterbirth comes a half-hour or so after the delivery, either before or after the mother has taken a bath. If it is slow in coming she will have the bath without waiting for it; although in earlier days it was customary to wait for t. Nowadays government midwives, if called in, pull the afterbirth *ex utero* if it does not immediately follow the delivery; and some others do this too.

> Badaga women seldom go to hospital or even call a doctor during child-birth. If they do so one can be sure that things are very serious and often complicated. One day a Badaga woman was carried to the hospital . . . It was a case of retained placenta of three weeks duration, as the relatives told us. The woman was semi-conscious and pale with the loss of blood . . . (Ketti Medical Mission 1953:4).

With the increase in government programs for training midwives, such tragedies are becoming very rare. Some Badagas apparently knew of a medicine which they also provided Todas with to release a delayed placenta (Rivers 1906: 323).

Next, the floor where the child was born is washed with a cowdung solution. A handful of hay is lit with a brand from the fire and circled around several times over the damp spot. The burnt hay is then thrown away and the firebrand hit on the floor at that point. The same place is then scratched with an adze, for it is said that if this is not done the child will get itches on the skin. (No spells are spoken; and it is not important to get the cowdung dried by the fire.)

The afterbirth is then carried by a woman to somewhere, generally within the hamlet boundary, where it can be buried. This can be anywhere distant from the settlement. Men may come to help dig the hole, but will not touch the polluting afterbirth. It is bundled up in the dirty cloths or sacks, all of which are buried with it. A big stone and thorn bushes are put on top of the burial place, simply to make sure that no jackals or dogs eat it, for Badagas do

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not savour the idea of that; (although if it happens nothing in particular follows). Should the infant die shortly afterwards, before it has been named, it too is treated as afterbirth material and buried at the usual cemetery. If someone asks the mournful family who has died, the answer must be "No one."

4.13. For the first day or two after birth the mother is given a hot bath four or five times daily. Up till this time she cannot bathe herself, but must have some woman help her. After that time she bathes herself in hot water, twice daily until 25 to 30 days after delivery, and thereafter once daily. Always, the water used is hot. The baby is given a bath three times daily for the first eight days, then twice a day till the nineteenth day, and thereafter once daily, in the evening only.

In the old days, the newly delivered mother was given a special preparation of little millet. This was first baked, and then boiled till it was a mushy porridge (Birch 1838: 104). Now she eats a non-liquid curry. For that peppercorns are fried in a clarified butter, then ground up on the curry grinder. Then some garlic is fried, and salt, tamarind and clarified butter mixed with it while it is kept warm beside the fire. A limited amount of this food is given to the mother twice daily until the fourth or fifth day after delivery, by an old woman who will restrict the quantity even though the mother might want more. Thereafter, for the next 20 to 40 days, according to the state of the mother's health, she continues with this as her morning meal, but in the evenings has paddy rice and lentil soup. She can take a small amount of milk, even from the day of her delivery. This can only be cow's milk, and must be boiled before drinking. It is recognized that a woman who has given birth may appear weak and ugly, and repeated births can lead to ill-health. A proverb puts it this way: "The appearance of a woman who has just given birth to one child is like the appearance of a heifer which has given birth that day."

No woman who has given birth may touch any household utensils till the third, fifth, seventh or ninth day after the first full or new moon, I was told; alternatively it has been reported that she must first see the crescent moon before the period of pollution can end (Thurston 1909: 109). She should be given no work for eight days before or eight days after her delivery: during that fortnight her husband must provide for all her needs, even if he is on the point of divorcing her. It used to be that after five, seven,

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826 827 842 It is important that a child should look like a mixture of both parents, even though it is believed to develop solely from the man's semen when in the mother's womb. If it resembles only one of them, that parent will die within a year of the child's birth. The skin should preferably be light in complexion, and relatives will then be very proud of it. If a child is born with grey hair or light-coloured eyes, however, it is felt the family will not like it.

844 787 Badagas also believe that if a woman's first birth is a daughter, she will have further births. If the seventh birth is a daughter and the eighth a son, then the family will prosper. People also say that if while crawling the infant is seen to peer at its genitals, the next child born to the mother will be of the opposite sex.

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Thurston (1909). We will simply offer a listing of what the ceremonies are, in chronological order, and will also describe those nonceremonial childhood events which alter the surface of the human body in some way, and hence are of some relevance to an account of Badaga health and illness.

(*a*) *Birth*. The only ceremonial aspect at delivery is a magical act to ward off any evil influence. It is described in detail above (4.11).

(*b*) *Naming*. This important ceremony makes the child into a social being, and must be performed before the fortieth day of life. Should it die before the ceremony the child's corpse is buried without a formal funeral (Jagor 1876: 199; Thurston 1909: 110).

(*c*) *Head Shaving*. This is usually combined with the ear boring, and should occur within about a year of the child's birth, but after the naming ceremony. The shaving is now done with a razor but formerly used a fragment of bottle glass (Thurston 1909: 110). Children should have a second complete shave at any time from two weeks to a year afterwards, but with no further ceremony, before their hair is allowed to grow long.

(*d*) *Ear Boring*. Sometimes this used to be combined with the naming ceremony (Jagor 1876: 199), but otherwise it occurs during a child's first year. It should follow the shaving. An earring is simply touched to the child's ear, but several years later the lobes will be punctured without any further ceremony, using the point of an earring for this (Rhiem 1900: 503).

(*e*) *First Tooth Ceremony*. Generally all babies get their lower teeth first, but in the case of a boy there will be a small ceremony if he gets teeth in the *upper* jaw first.

(*f*) *School*. There is no ceremony for when a child starts school, but the parents select an auspicious day for this and distribute sweets to the new classmates.

(*g*) *Nostril Piercing*. This is done in a girl's ninth, eleventh or thirteenth year on an auspicious day, but without any ceremony. In earlier times it was essential for a girl to have a nose-ring before she got married. Since about 1955 the practice has stopped altogether, and before that it was often combined with a girl's tattooing.

(*h*) *Tattooing*. Today the tattooing of girls is going out of fashion, and few of the younger women are so marked. A century ago however all women were tattooed on the forehead, and Jagor illustrates

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759 that if this habit became general, the therapists would make themselves equally accessible to all patients.

844 There is a local tradition that a midwife should be given a new
431 dress by the child's father after a delivery. It is actually given at the child's naming ceremony or else on the last day of the funeral observation should the neonate die. For the last 15 years of her life Sithamma did not deliver babies herself, but was sometimes in attendance and instructed her assistants. People still offered her the dress, but she blessed it and asked them to give it to somebody in need of it.

Midwives

759 10.6. Through the centuries there has been one special role, out-
554 side of the family, that has always been held by women, and that is the role of midwife. It has been a position that commands respect for the skill that she must have. Not every woman of course is a potential midwife; but the interested younger women receive some training whenever a delivery occurs in their village. A midwife quite often becomes more than a deliverer of babies. Partly because she is asked to minister to the varied health needs of parturient women and the newborn, she is trusted and consulted and may in time become skilled as a curer of other physical disorders as well. Sometimes she supervises birth among the domestic animals.

759 Often there is more than one midwife in a village; other women
844 are asked to come to a delivery if they have helped with one before, and of course the girls who are learning midwifery attend.
842 Yet other women will want to come and watch, and barren women may feel that if they attend they might also become pregnant through the magic of contiguity. The small room may therefore be quite crowded and stuffy.

759 Midwives go to their work without necessarily washing first. A
844 midwife is polluted by each birth—for three days if it is the
783 mother's first delivery, for one day otherwise ; but this does not imperil a midwife's status in the community. If it is a woman's first
515 delivery, the midwife throws her own clothes away, otherwise she just washes them. A high-status Lingayat such as Sithamma removes her *linga* emblem before beginning at the polluting

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task, and does not put it on again till she has bathed herself at the end of the pollution period.

Today each cluster of villages (i.e. Panchayat Board) has one trained nurse and two or three midwives appointed by the State Government. The later are just experienced Badaga midwives with no formal training who happen to have been recommended for the position.

Exorcists and Shamans

10.7. Badaga exorcists are always male, and are very few in number. As often as not Badagas' ghosts have to be exorcized by non-Badaga exorcists. These men may also have lesser therapeutic skills, such as making talismans to ward off fevers and evil influences from the children who wear them. The idiosyncratic nature of exorcism is sufficiently indicated by the examples in Chapter 8 and calls for no further elaboration here.

The most feared *mantrava:dis* (shamans) in the Nilgiris were members of the Kurumba tribe, one of whom might be "called in on all occasions of blight and murrain to propitiate or scare the demon of disease"—if such there be (Breeks 1873: 53). Though this may still occasionally happen, I find no record of Kurumbas acting as exorcists to the Badagas, even though they did offer much supernatural protection to them from the sorcery of other malicious Kurumbas ; and they do sometimes try to cure the sick. Thus, "In 1891, the inmates of a single Kurumba but were said to have been murdered, and the hut burnt to ashes, because one of the family had been treating a sick Badaga child, and failed to cure it.... Again, in 1900, a whole family of Kurumbas were murdered, of which the head, who had a reputation as a medicine man, was believed to have brought disease and death into a Badaga village." (Thurston 1912: 233-34 ; also 1909 : 86). The Badagas were never so brutal with their own therapists, but the latter never seemed to be holding the threat of sorcery over the heads of their fellows. The worst that an unpopular therapist might have to suffer would be the mockery of an appropriate proverb; for instance, "He has healed others, but cannot cure himself" (Metz 1864 :95), or "It is half bad if you do something [wrong] when you know about it; entirely bad if you do it when you are ignorant."